

Amendments to the Claims:

Please add the following claim:

80. (New) A device for monitoring structural weakening of a material disposed within a body to be placed at least partially in soil, the weakening resulting from exposure to subterranean organisms, the device comprising:

means for applying a force to the material, the force being effective to cause a displacement of at least a portion of the material when there is a weakening of the material;

wherein a passageway is disposed through at least a portion of the body from the soil toward the material, wherein the passageway is enclosed by one or more sidewalls, the passageway being dimensioned to permit travel of the subterranean organisms from the soil toward the material and being tapered from a wide end proximate to the soil to a narrow end proximate to the material, whereby the passageway directs the subterranean organisms toward a specific portion of the material where the subterranean organisms can cause a weakening of the material; and

means for signaling the weakening of the material, in response to the displacement, resulting from the material's exposure to the subterranean organisms.

81. (New) A device for monitoring structural weakening of a material disposed within a body to be placed at least partially in soil, the weakening resulting from exposure to subterranean organisms, the device comprising:

a spring mechanism that applies a force to the material, the force being effective to cause a displacement of at least a portion of the material when there is a weakening of the material; extra

a passageway disposed through at least a portion of the body from the soil toward the material, wherein the passageway being dimensioned to permit travel of the subterranean organisms from the soil toward the material, the passageway having a larger opening proximate to the soil relative to a narrower opening proximate to the material, whereby the passageway directs the subterranean organisms toward a specific portion of the material where the subterranean organisms can cause a concentrated weakening of the material; and

means for signaling the weakening of the material, in response to the displacement, as a result of the material's exposure to the subterranean organisms.